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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. Wednesday, May 4, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY.

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes. All Regions.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Station______________ in___________presenting Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. The Neighbor's subject for this occasion is RAISING CHICKENS IN THE BACK YARD. All right, Neighbor, what's the story this time?

No story to-day. Just a little bit of experience------my own personal experience in raising chickens in the back yard.

I believe it was Benjamin Franklin who said that, "Experience is a dear teacher." And you know I've found it about that way too. For instance, I did a great deal of fishing one summer about three years ago. That fishing caused me to neglect my young chickens and growing pullets. I don't mean that I let them starve. Not at all. I looked after them in a sort of half-hearted way and kept feed before tham most of the time. But I'll admit that I did find the feed hoppers empty time and again.

Well, everything went along all right until the laying season that fall. My pullets looked about as well as W.R.B's back-yard pullets, but his pullets were laying at the beginning of the laying season and mine were not. That was the difference. He won and I lost.

When I began to check up on my pullets I found that they were thin. Yes siree. Thin! Of course, they didn't look thin because they had nice, new feathers, but when you picked up a pullet and examined her with your hands----the evidence was there----she was really thin, and that was why I failed, and why my pullets were not laying.

So, I say experience is a dear teacher because it took that experience to teach me that you ought to keep plenty of feed before growing chickens, not only while they are in the baby-chick stage, but throughout the summer and the entire growing period so that they'll be strong and thrifty, and in a good state of flesh at laying time.

I learned my lesson from experience. But you don't have to pay the price that I paid three years ago because successful poultry raisers have found out

for you that it pays to keep your growing chickens well supplied with the proper feeds. Learn by the other fellow's experience. For instance, if you'll get a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No.1541-F entitled "FEEDING CHICKENS," you'll find what feeds to use, when to change from mash to grain, and many other suggestions that will, if followed, enable you to have your pullets ready for the nest at the beginning of the laying season this fall.

For example, the bulletin says, Besides mash and grains, chicks need green feed. I supply my growing chickens with plenty of green feed by keeping them on a grassy part of the back yard. But if no grass is available, you can supply your growing chickens with green feed by using chopped alfalfa, alfalfa leaf meal, or sprouted oats.

And don't forget milk. I consider milk one of the best chicken feeds that I have ever used. I've used all kinds of forms of milk and they all give good results. It doesn't make much difference what kind of milk you use; but use milk in some form if you can.

I have a neighbor across the street who likes to go on all-day motor trips about this time of the year. She'll get up early in the morning, fill her chicken hoppers with mash, put her two small daughters in the car and away they go.

I asked her the other day how she managed to stay away from her young chickens all day. "Oh," she said, "that's easy, because my chickens are now nearly three weeks old, and I don't bother with chickens after they reach that age. They can take care of themselves then."

This lady is a good friend of ours so I didn't say "yeah?" But that's what I wanted to say. To my way of thinking, right along about now is a critical period in the life of your growing chicks. What you do or fail to do for your growing chickens this summer will be reflected in egg production this fall. At least I've found it that way.

Take crowding, for instance. Chickens grow fast at this season of the year. And what was plenty of brooder room two weeks ago may be too little room now. It doesn't take a bunch of growing chickens long to outgrow small quarters; so keep an eye on the brood coops, the brooder house, or what ever method of brooding you use, and don't allow your chicks to become crowded.

Ventilation is another thing that I watch at this season of the year. You know the days are warming up now, and what was good ventilation a few weeks ago may not be enough now.

Then there's the problem of water. Growing chicks, you know, drink a lot of water, especially in warm weather. And I have found from 10 years experience in the back-yard poultry business that it's poor economy to let the drinking fountain run dry and the feed hopper become empty.

My motto now is close attention to details while my future layers are developing. For best results they should make a good steady growth from the time they leave the shells as baby chicks until they reach the nest boxes as mature pullets. To make that steady growth they need good comfortable quarters, plenty of regular feed, water, and careful management.

And speaking of management reminds me that young chickens do better on clean ground where they can't pick up parasites and troubles. Of course, I don't raise many young chicks now. I buy pullets later on. But I used to raise 40 to 50 chickens in my back yard every spring, and I learned, that it's best to grow your chicks on clean ground.

W.R.B. still raises 30 or 40 chicks in his back yard every spring, and I notice that he solves the clean-ground problem by having two separate chicken yards. Being in the back yard these two yards are naturally small, but each yard is a separate unit in itself.

His plan is to rotate his growing chickens from one yard to the other about once every 10 days or 2 weeks, depending on conditions, so as to keep the chickens on clean ground. He forks up the soil in his idle yard just as soon as the chicks leave that yard. Stirring up the soil you know is a good way to keep the yard free from parasites. Parasites -- at least most parasites -- don't like sunshine and the open air, and when you fork up a chicken yard it doesn't do the parasites a bit of good. So, if you're cramped for space in your back yard, you can still keep your chicks on clean ground by rotating your yards and forking up the soil.

But there's no use for me to tell you about all these things. You're apt to forget what I say. What you want is something that you can keep and refer to from time to time as the need for specific information arises.

So, in conclusion let me refer you to two publications that have helped me solve many back-yard poultry problems. They are: Farmers' Bulletin No. 1541-F entitled "FEEDING CHICKENS," and Farmers' Bulletin No.1508-F called "POULTRY KEEPING IN BACK YARDS."

And now Mother Thompson and I bid you good-bye and good luck until this time next Wednesday.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: And that was Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS coming to you from Station______________in____________. Send your request to this station for copies of Farmers' Bulletin No.1541 entitled "FEEDING CHICKENS", and Farmers' Bulletin No. 1508 called "POULTRY KEEPING IN BACK YARDS."

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. Wednesday, May 11, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY.

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes. All Regions.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: This is Station ___ ________ on the air presenting Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. Neighbor Thompson's subject for this occasion is "unwelcome visitors." All right, Neighbor, who is it this time?

- - - - - -

Nobody. I'm not talking about people. The most unwelcome visitor that calls at our house doesn't ring the doorbell. Yet he's a frequent caller during the spring season, and is very familiar----- in fact, entirely too familiar with our outdoor surroundings.

But familiar as he is with us and our surroundings, we are not so familiar with him when it comes to control measures.

I speak mainly of the ordinary ground mole, and his ally, the field mouse. We've been dealing with these creatures for years and years, and yet there remains important, and in some cases, even vital misunderstandings about their habits and methods of control.

For instance, the mole often gets blamed for what the field mouse does. But as a matter of fact, moles seldom damage plants at all, except when they root them up. The ordinary ground mole, as you may know, is not a vegetarian but chiefly a meat-eater, and its diet consists almost entirely of such things as earthworms, cutworms, grubs, beetles and other animal matter. So if you find that your plants have been nibbled on, you can be pretty sure that the culprit is a mouse and not a mole. At least that's been my experience.

And yet, last spring one of my neighbors insisted that moles were eating his tulip bulbs. Of course I didn't believe it, but he insisted that I make an investigation. Well sir, believe it or not, but the evidence seemed actually against the moles. Their runs circled right up to the tulip beds. Still I wasn't convinced, and I suggested that my neighbor try a little experiment. I helped him of course. Late one afternoon we placed pieces of poisoned sweetpotato in the mole runs up near the tulip beds. And what do you suppose we found the next morning? A mole? No indeed. TWO dead field mice. So you see mice as well as moles use mole

runs, and that's why moles are sometimes unjustly accused.

But don't misunderstand me. I'm not standing up for moles. Not on your life. They've caused me too much trouble by rooting up my front yard, plowing my potato patch, and tunneling through Mother Thompson's flower beds. And despite the usefulness of their food habits, you may find it necessary to get rid of them to stop the damage they often do to such things as lawns, golfgreens, flower beds, and garden vegetables. I make it my policy, however, to leave these little creatures alone until they begin rooting where they have no business. When they do that I get busy and resort to anything that will get rid of 'em, and that, by the way, is sometimes a perplexing problem, because an old experienced mole is hard to catch.

For instance, moles, as a rule, live under ground. I've never seen one venture outside of its tunnel. As you know they are practically blind, and if you want to catch moles, remember that they make up for blindness with a keen hearing, a sharp sense of smell, and a very sensitive touch. In other words, it takes quick thinking and fast work to dig out a mole that is rooting up dirt right before your eyes.

There's a popular belief in my neighborhood that moles work only certain hours of the day and night, but I haven't found it that way. On the other hand, I've found miles working at nearly all hours of the day *and* night.

On top of that I've found that the mole is a year-round worker. I have actually caught moles in the winter time when the ground was frozen. I'm not saying, though that you can do that every day. I merely mention it to prove that the mole is a year-round worker. It never hibernates, and it can be trapped even in winter, provided the ground isn't frozen so hard as to prevent the trap from working. But, as you perhaps know, the *best* time to catch a mole is during the warm seasons when the soil is soft and the mole can push up visible runways.

Because of the mole's food habits it's almost a waste of time to try to feed it poison. It feeds almost entirely on living prey, and you can't very well make poison bait from living creatures and keep them alive.

Trapping is not altogether a satisfactory method of controlling moles, either, because a mole is too sensitive to danger to be caught in an ordinary trap. I get fairly good results from a specially designed mole trap called a "choker-loop" trap. My friend W.R.B. uses a "scissors" type mole trap and others use a spring pitchfork trap. You can get these and many other kinds of mole traps at seed stores.

Occasionally you can drown moles out by inserting the garden hose into their runways and turning on the water. I resorted to the drowning out method last summer when a mole got too familiar with our front lawn, and it worked all right in that case, but as I remember it took a lot of water.

Another way to get rid of moles is to drive them out of small areas by means of substances that have bad odors to the moles. These substances inserted into the runways. W.R.B. uses naphthalene with fairly good results. If you're having trouble with moles this spring I suggest that you write to this station or to the Department of Agriculture for Farmers' Bulletin 1247-F, "American Moles as Agricultural Pests and as Fur Producers." This bulletin explains control methods developed by the Biological Survey.

And now I'll say a few words about the mole's ally, the field mouse. Compared to the mole, field mice are both easier to trap and to poison, but on the other hand I've found from experience that field mice are capable of doing much more serious damage than moles. In fact, field mice are probably, the most destructive pests of the average ornamental garden.

W.R.B.'s plan of controlling the short-tailed field mice during the spring months is to poison them with sweetpotato bait. That gets rid of the old mice before they have time to multiply and produce a crop of young mice. And I've seen him use parsnips for bait when he couldn't get sweetpotatoes.

His method is to cut the sweetpotatoes or parsnips into small cubes and dust these with a mixture of powdered strychnine and baking soda and then drop the poisoned cubes into the mice holes in the ground around fence posts, old stumps, or whereever the holes happen to be. Be sure they are well out of sight where nothing else can ever get them.

Trapping is also effective in the control of field mice, but I won't have time to tell you about that today.

There's a farmers' bulletin called "MOUSE CONTROL IN FIELD AND ORCHARD." The number of that bulletin is 1397-F, and you can get a free copy from this station by merely writing or telephoning for it.

If you're having trouble with field mice in your ornamental garden, in your vegetable garden, or in your little orchard, if you happen to have a few fruit trees, I can recommend this bulletin on mouse control. You'll find it full of practical suggestions and, to my way of thinking, well worthy of a place in your back yard garden library.

And now until this time next Wednesday Mother Thompson and I bid you good bye and good luck.

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CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: And so we conclude another weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS sent to you through the cooperation of the United States Department of Agriculture and Station _____________ in ________________. Send your request to Station __________ for free copies of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1397-F entitled "MOUSE CONTROL IN FIELD AND ORCHARD," and Farmers' Bulletin No. 1247-F, "American Moles as Agricultural Pests and as Fur Producers."

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS

Wednesday, May 18, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY.

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes.

All Regions.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Station ____________ in ______________ presenting Neighbor Thompson's weekly PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. The Neighbor's timely subject for this occasion is "POISON IVY." And if time permits, he'll pay his respects to that other trouble maker---- "POISON SUMAC." All right, Neighbor

---

Well, here we are at the beginning of another picnic season.

As a member of the Society of Veteran Picnickers, I have nothing whatever against well regulated picnics. For instance, I don't mind a little sand in my vegetables, and rather enjoy lolling about on the cool, green grass.

But I draw the line on one thing. I absolutely refuse to pitch my table-cloth within 200 yards of poison ivy.

Of course, I'll admit that you can't always see poison ivy 200 yards away, or even 2 yards away-----and there's always danger of running on it accidentally. But don't deliberately pitch your picnic camp on or even near poison ivy if you know it.

That brings up the question of how to recognize poison ivy. And that's important too. For example, I'm of the opinion that thousands of picnickers are poisoned every year, not because they deliberately walk into poison ivy, but because they don't know how to recognize and avoid poison ivy. I know from experience that some people get their first lesson when they collect poison ivy foliage for ornamental purposes. And that happens every year.

But the problem of recognizing poison ivy plants is not always as easy as it sounds. That I suppose is due partly at least to the fact that poison ivy is known by so many local names such as "three-leaved ivy," "poison creeper," "climing sumac," "markweed," "picry," and "mercury."

On top of that I know of sections where poison ivy is known as poison oak. But if you are susceptible to poisoning, the name doesn't matter. The results are the same under any name or in any language.

The United States Department of Agriculture tells us that poison ivy in the eastern part of the United States is a three-leaved plant that grows in the form of vines, trailing shrubs, or low, erect bushes.---That slightly different forms of the poison ivy plant occur in other sections of the country, and that some of them are called "poison oak."

Farmers' Bulletin No.1166, that I'm going to offer you at the end of this talk, says, "Poison ivy, including poison oak, is found in one or more forms in practically all sections of the country. The various forms, including several distinct botanical species, differ mainly in the shape and margins of the leaflets, the size of the fruit, and the habit of growth. They are so much alike in general character that familiarity with one form will make it possible to recognize the plants wherever encountered, whether in the form of vines or shrubs."

The specialist in the Dept. of Agriculture says that poison ivy flourishes in many places, and that you are likely to run across it out in the open fields as well as in the woods. Poison ivy grows in low, moist soil, as well as in dry soil, and on hillsides as well as low lands. It is especially abundant along old fence rows, and at the edges of paths and roadways. You may find poison ivy scrambling over a rock wall, climbing posts or trees, or covering up tombstones in an old cemetery.

But wherever you find poison ivy, you'll always find the three leaflets to each leaf, to remind you of danger and of the old saying, "Leaflets three, let it be."

So, if you want to learn how to recognize poison ivy, study its leaves. And you'll find, on examining a poison ivy plant, that poison ivy leaves are always divided into three leaflets.

And now we come to the most interesting part of the whole story, namely------how do you catch it? It meaning the poison from poison ivy plants.

And the answer to that question is, I suppose, still debatable, because nearly every poison ivy victim tells a different story. For instance, I know a man who says that he never gets poisoned unless he "wallows" on the poison ivy plants, and another man who says that his skin will start "itching" the moment he gets in sight of poison ivy.

But here's the greatest story of all. It's from the man who claims to have been poisoned from the smoke of his neighbors burning brush pile.

Just why some people are poisoned and others escape is still, I suppose, somewhat of a mystery. But it is a known fact that you don't actually have to touch the poison ivy plant to catch the poisoning. No siree, you can get it easier than that.

According to the Dept.of Agriculture the poisonous substance present in the plant that makes the trouble is of an oily nature.

How?

By simply touching shoes, or articles of clothing that have this oily substance from the plant on them.

In regard to the smoke story the specialist in the Dept. says, "It is we well known that the smoke from burning plants in a brush pile will carry the poison," and"even this smoke may affect the skin of a person susceptible to poisoning."

And now for those of you who think you are immune to ivy poisoning, I want to quote a paragraph from the bulletin I mentioned a moment ago. It says

"Many persons believe themselves immune to ivy poison and seem to be able to handle the plants freely without harm. Experiments and experience, however, show that complete immunity to ivy poisoning does not exist." And "many supposedly immune persons have not only been poisoned by carelessly handling the plants, but afterwards have suffered attacks on the slightest exposure."

And regardless of the fact that it is now possible for the average person to recognize poison ivy, that plant still poisons thousands of people every year. That makes it necessary to say something about the treatment of poison ivy victims.

The simplest, and perhaps one of ghe best ways to prevent poisoning is a thorough scrubbing of the skin with a strong alkali soap and running hot water. That removes the poison oil from the surface of the skin, and is a good preventive provided you do this immediately after exposure and before the oil has soaked in.

Be sure, however, that you use running hot water, if possible, and a good heavy lather of ordinary laundry soap, or one having an excess of alkali.

There are other preventives and several remedies for poison ivy victims, but I won't attempt to give them over the radio. You'll find some of these in the bulletin.

In addition to poison ivy, the bulletin contains information on the poison SUMAC which is a close relative of poison ivy. I might say, however, that poison sumac is not nearly so widely distributed as the ivy and grows only in swamps or on wet ground.

The leaves of poison sumac are divided into 7 to 13 leaflets, and they're always arranged in pairs like the leaf of an ash, with a single leaflet at the end. A safe rule to follow is to avoid all shrubs growing in low land that have leaves of this general character.

And now in conclusion let me repeat that you can get detailed directions for eradicating poison ivy and poison sumac and for treating their victims, from Farmers' Bulletin No.1166-F entitled "POISON IVY AND POISON SUMAC AND THEIR ERADICATION."

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: That concludes Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS for this week. The bulletin he mentioned is Farmers' Bulletin No.1166-F called "POISON IVY AND POISON SUMAC AND THEIR ERADICATION." You can get copies of that bulletin by sending your request to Station ____________________ in ________________.

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS

Wednesday, May 25, 1932

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Speaking Time: 10 Minutes.

All Regions.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT: Every Wednesday Station _______ presents Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture. The Neighbor's subject for this occasion is "SQUAB RAISING." All right, Neighbor.

Mother Thompson is really the pigeon raiser at our house. At least I like to let her think she is anyway.

Besides, I hardly feel qualified to pose as an expert on raising pigeons or squabs, even though I've had more than five years of what I suppose some people would call rather successful experience.

So when I was asked to give this talk on squab raising, I sat down and wrote my friend A. R. Lee a poultry specialist of the United States Department of Agriculture. I asked Mr. Lee to give me some good, timely pointers on squab raising. Well, I got the pointers all right, and now I'm going to pass them along to you coupled up with a little bit of my own back-yard experience in raising squabs.

As far as I have found out from my own experience and from what Mr. Lee tells me there are about six breeds of pigeons used for producing squabs. These six breeds make up what the specialists call the utility class of pigeons. All these breeds have several varieties which are used at least to some extent for squab raising.

Now don't ask me what is the best breed of pigeons for raising squabs. That is not an easy question to answer, because market conditions and market preferences differ in different places. As a rule, however, it is safe to say that the best breed to use depends on your local market. Speaking broadly for the country as a whole, I understand the biggest demand is for good-sized squabs which have light-colored skins.

The White Kings, Red Carneau, and White Swiss Mondaine, are all good producers of squabs of the larger size. But I know from experience that some restaurants and hotels prefer a smaller squab because it is cheaper. And I have found that the Homer is well adapted for that trade. The Hungarian is a good breeder but is kept principally for exhibition. The Runt produces a very large squab but is a slow breeder and does well only in very small flocks.

But regardless of the breed he favors, the squab raiser has to have good breeding stock. Good breeding stock is one of the essentials of success in squab raising. Buy pigeons from a reliable breeder, and if possible from a dealer who guarantees them.

I know from sad experience that many failures in squab raising are due to poor stock. As you perhaps know, it is practically impossible to determine the age and sex of pigeons by casual observation. So unless you buy your breeding stock from a reliable dealer, you have no way of actually knowing whether you are getting old, worn-out pigeons, a surplus of male birds, or a good foundation flock of thrifty, young, mated pigeons. So, let me say again, that I have found that it pays to buy your breeding pigeons from a reliable dealer, and preferably from one who guarantees his stock.

I had a letter the other day from a friend of mine who asked me to tell him where he could buy some pigeon eggs for hatching purposes. But I couldn't tell him that because pigeons' eggs are never sold and are never set in the incubator or under the "settin'" hen. No siree, pigeons are funny in a lot of ways, and particularly in regard to reproduction.

Pigeons sit on their own eggs. And I say pigeons because both the male and the female sit on the eggs. The male usually sits from about eight o'clock in the morning until about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the female stays on the nest the rest of the time. That shift sounds like a fifty-fifty proposition doesn't it? And that's exactly what it is.

Pigeon eggs hatch in about 17 days. The hen pigeon usually lays one egg, skips a day, and then lays again. As a rule a pigeon hen lays only two eggs, but sometimes she lays more. I have found, however, that when a pigeon lays more, it is a good idea to remove all but two of the eggs, because a pair of pigeons can raise only two good squabs at a time. That's because it's such a big job to feed a squab and because a squab takes all its food from its parents until it is about ready to leave the nest.

Squabs are reared and fed by both the parent birds on a thick, creamy mixture called pigeon milk, which is produced in the crops of the parent pigeons. The feeding usually takes place shortly after the parent birds have eaten, and it is not advisable to disturb them in any way until the feeding is over.

Pigeons, and especially squabs, do better when they are kept under sanitary conditions, fed and watered at regular times, and then left alone. Don't disturb them any more than necessary. Of course, if the parent birds die, you'll have to do something with the squabs. Sometimes you can solve that problem by putting each of the orphan squabs in another nest that has only one squab. For very valuable squabs, artificial feeding may pay, but it is a very expensive proposition.

Each pair of pigeons will produce 1 or 2 to as high as 10 or 11 pairs of squabs a year. About 7 pairs is the average of the large breeds.

As a rule the squabs won't be ready for market until they are about 4 weeks old. By this time the birds will be fully feathered out under the wings, and at their best for table purposes. My squabs usually weigh about

a pound apiece at four weeks old, and I make it a practice to market them about that time.

I get the best prices for my squabs during cold weather. I suppose that is because good squabs are scarce at that time. Pigeons do not breed as freely in cold weather as they do during the spring. I save my spring squabs for breeding as they bring less money than winter squabs. On top of that I have observed that winter squabs do not grow as well as those produced during the spring and summer.

I have found that pigeon rations differ radically from chicken rations. Pigeons are not fed any mash or green feed. Pigeons are fed grain only, plus a good supply of clean, fresh water and some minerals, such as limestone, bone meal, and salt.

Because pigeons do not eat mash I have found it pays to feed them on grains that are high in protein such as field peas, peanuts, and cowpeas. And I have also found that pigeons are very fond of such grains as corn, kafir, and wheat. They don't seem to care anything about milk, but they are especially fond of water.

I might add also that cats and rats are very fond of young squabs and that I've found it necessary to keep cats and rats out of the pigeon loft.

As I said a moment ago, I've been raising squabs for a number of years and have naturally accumulated some little experience in that field, but I don't claim to be an authority on the subject at all. I get most of my pigeon pointers from Mr. Lee's bulletin on "SQUAB RAISING." And I recommend that bulletin to those of you who want detailed information on squab raising.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT: That was Neighbor Thompson's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS coming to you from Station _______ in ___________. Write this station for your copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 684-F called "SQUAB RAISING."